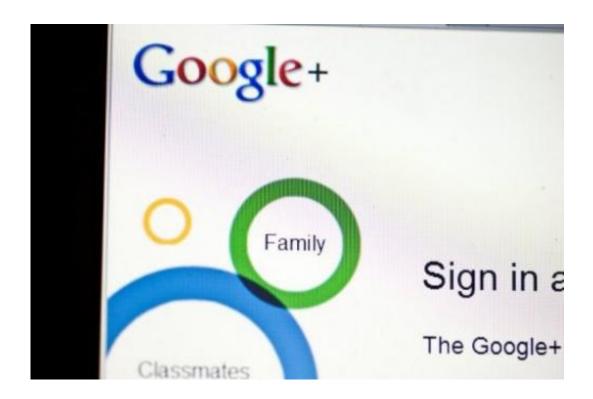


Google social network adding verified accounts

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File photo shows the Google+ sign-in page displayed on a computer screen. Google announced that it will let users of its online social network have verified accounts with names or brands in a manner similar to that offered at Facebook and Twitter.

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Custom Google+ page addresses were rolled out to a limited number of profiles including the footballer David Beckham, actor Hugh Jackman, singer Britney Spears, and Japanese car maker Toyota, the company said in a blog post.

"At first, we're introducing custom URLs to a limited number of verified profiles and pages," said Google product manager Saurabh Sharma.

"But over time we plan to offer custom URLs to many more brands and individuals."

Verified social network accounts with well-known names as Web addresses are intended to make it easy to find high-profile people or brands and avoid problems with imposters.

"A custom URL is a short, easy to remember Web address that links directly to your profile or pay on Google+," Sharma said.

Google+ launched last year in a challenge to social networking king Facebook.

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